

This paper means to demonstrate that the series of four signs (the shaking laurel and shrine, the nodding palm, and the singing swan) in the first five lines of Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* may be understood as two pairs of signs (Delphic and Delian), each of which introduces not only the god's imminent epiphany but also the theme of choral celebration that will occupy the remainder of the hymn.

Scholars of *Hymn 2* (e.g., Williams 1978, 16-20; Bassi 1989, 228-231; and Bing 1993, 182-184) have treated these signs individually, for their relevance either to other cult centers or to Callimachus' literary program. I hope to show that the hymn's choral theme to which the poet turns immediately after naming the signs (8) supplies them their significance within the dramatic context of the hymn, for they together reflect primarily the narrator's concern that the choral youths properly celebrate the god.

The shaking laurel (ὁ . . . δάφνινος ὄρπηξ, 1) and Apollo's μέλαθρον (2) are a Delphic pair of signs. The laurel is associated primarily with Delphi (Williams 1978, 16), while Apollo's only μέλαθρον elsewhere in literature is the temple there (Pindar, *P.* 5.40). But in citing the *cause* of the shrine's shaking, Apollo's "lovely foot" (καλῶ ποδί, 2.3), Callimachus recalls the Pythian portion of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (cf. Hopkinson 2000, 243), where the god's step and feet receive special attention as he twice dances as part of a choral paean, first upon his arrival at Olympus (καλὰ καὶ ὑψὶ βιβὰς . . . μαρμαρυγαί τε ποδῶν, 202-203) and later in procession with his new Delphic priests (καλὰ καὶ ὑψὶ βιβὰς, 516).

The next pair of signs, the Delian palm (ὁ Δῆλιος . . . φοῖνιξ, 4) and the singing swan (ὁ κύκνος, 5), introduces the theme of choral celebration in a Delian context. Once the palm, like the laurel before, has established the setting, the second sign, this time the swan, at once confirms the setting and introduces the choral theme. In Callimachus' own *Hymn to Delos* swans circle (ἐκυκλώσαντο, 250) the island seven times (249-254) as they sing, and the poet emphasizes there the choral associations of their flight. It is the inspiration for the lyre's having seven strings (249-254) and introduces two other etiological choruses that follow: that of the Cycladic islands (κύκλον . . . χορόν, 301) and that introduced to the island of Delos by Theseus (ἐγειρομένου κιθαρισμοῦ | κύκλιον ὠρχήσατο . . . χοροῦ, 312-313).

Given the choral associations of these pairs of signs, it should be no surprise that the narrator follows immediately with a brief series of injunctions that ends climactically with his command that the youths prepare for the choral paean (8). As in the shorter Homeric hymn to Apollo a lone swan in flight sings the god (1-2) and inspires the bard himself to song (5), here the singing swan may inspire the choral participation of the youths, while the kicking foot of Apollo may remind them of the god's participation in the paeans of the longer Homeric hymn. The narrator later draws attention to youths' feet (12) and again Apollo's (34), thus strengthening the association of celebrants with god, and even suggests that proper respect may win them a sighting of the deity (11). Nor indeed would it be unprecedented in Callimachus for Apollo himself to join a successful choral performance (*fr.* 227.1).